



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

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# Report to the General Assembly

*Submitted to*

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

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More at Four

Pre-Kindergarten Program

*Session Law 2010-31 Section 7.5 (g)*

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## **Evaluation of More at Four State Pre-Kindergarten**

### Summary

More at Four is North Carolina's state-funded pre-kindergarten program that is narrowly targeted to at-risk four-year-olds. Its purpose is to provide an academic pre-kindergarten experience during the year prior to kindergarten entry, targeting at-risk children from low-income families who have not been served in any other formal program. Pre-kindergarten classrooms meet standards set by the State Board of Education to align with K-3 education and prepare children for academic success.

An annual independent evaluation of More at Four is conducted by the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ten years of evaluations have shown More at Four to be a highly rigorous pre-kindergarten program that successfully targets low-income household children and those at-risk of later academic failure. Learning growth for all students is significant and above expectations for those children starting with the lowest knowledge base.

The most recent evaluation results indicate that More at Four is making a significant academic difference that extends at least through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. The FPG Child Development Institute's report "Long-term Effects of the North Carolina More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program: Children's Reading and Math Skills at Third Grade" shows that More at Four students who were considered economically disadvantaged in third grade in 2006-07 or 2007-08 and who attended More at Four for more than 70 percent of the 2002-03 or 2003-04 school year achieved statistically significant higher reading and math test scores, on average, than economically-disadvantaged children who did not attend More at Four. In addition, economically-disadvantaged third graders who attended More at Four narrowed the achievement gap with their non-economically-disadvantaged peers by up to 40 percent. (Peisner-Feinberg & Schaaf, 2010)

The FPG Child Development Institute is currently conducting an additional study of the effectiveness of More at Four using a rigorous methodology known as a regression discontinuity design to further investigate the effect of More at Four on learning growth. NCDPI's Office of Early Learning is also currently exploring a randomized assignment or experimental evaluation design for a future More at Four evaluation, which would be the first of its kind in evaluating a statewide pre-kindergarten program in the United States.

To maximize the effectiveness of More at Four in significantly improving learning gains for children, the NC Department of Public Instruction is integrating pre-kindergarten into the educational continuum in North Carolina. State funding for pre-kindergarten (More at Four) is integrated with federal sources of funding for pre-kindergarten, including Title I Pre-K, Even Start, Head Start, and Preschool Exceptional Children, within the NC Department of Public Instruction's Office of Early Learning. Further, NCDPI's focus on Pre-K through Grade 3 alignment of standards, curriculum, instructional practices and assessment maximizes academic gains for children throughout these early grades, providing a strong academic foundation that leads to improved high school graduation rates.

### Current Reports Submitted to Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

The following three documents are submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee to provide the most current information about the More at Four evaluation:

- Evaluation of More at Four State Pre-Kindergarten: The First Ten Years
- Long-term Effects of the North Carolina More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program: Children's Reading and Math Skills at Third Grade (Peisner-Feinberg and Schaaf, 2010)
- Summary of Key Findings (Peisner-Feinberg and Schaaf, 2010)

To review all More at Four evaluation results since 2002 from the FPG Child Development Institute, please visit the evaluation web site at:

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~mafeval/pages/publications.cfm>